

"ON WITH THE DANCE!"

Continued from page 6

movements that come under the head of *adagio*. The only self-respecting answer to such rebellion is discipline.

Adagio work is sculptural decoration; harmony of line developed to the utmost, manifested by the human body. *Adagio* exercises reveal how amazingly beautiful the human form not-always-divine may be, when made to comply with decorative principles. As the *allegro* delights with vivacious movement, the *adagio* charms with sustained pictures, flowing from one to another through movement "creamy" and suave. The occasional employment of a flash of lightning in the shape of movement as quick as muscles can command, heightens the effect of poise, and also saves the deliberate movements from danger of monotony. Pavlova's triple *pirouette* in an *adagio* movement is one of the high instances of contrast in speed, and proof of its esthetic value. Following a series of slow *arabesques*, that *pirouette* is like the release of an arrow from a slow-drawn bow.

The *arabesque*, like a fundamental form in architecture, is ever recurrent in *adagio* work. Here is an exercise for drill in the poise with which it must be accompanied, and the suavity with which it must be entered upon and left.

FOR the cultivation of grace of arm there are *porte de bras* exercises. These are combined with exercises of the legs and body. It is such combination exercise that is represented in the accompanying dry point of Madame Genée. Bear in mind that practice of this sort, though deliberate in speed, is no mere matter of going through the motions as one pushes his arms and legs through the routine of his muscle-building or fat-combatting calisthenics. The dancer holds herself to standards of grace as uncompromising as ever a jewelry designer set for his lines: not the grace that merely avoids awkwardness, but a positive quality of line that reaches out and grips your attention and your emotion together. Were you ever present when a music master, after a student had produced a *sound*, seized the violin and drew forth a living *tone*, the kind of tone that puts prosy reality away from you, and prepares your mind to accept anything? The dancer's grace can be carried to the same emotion-commanding point. It is that point at which the dancer is always aiming.

In the ballet *Coppelia* the leading dancer makes her first appearance at a window, in the act of opening the shutters; there, with extended arms, the music holds her for some seconds. Genée's performance of that action alone was such that even the hard-headed and cool-blooded saw it with a tightening of the throat. That, if you please, is the sort of thing we mean by the chorographic standard of grace.

A delight in themselves, and of high value in the composition of a dance, is the family of steps known as the *pirouettes*. Without *pirouettes* what would dancing be? The sensation imparted by the sight of a revolving body is quite distinct from that which we receive from any other movement; and the sensation is shaded in a score of different ways, according to the speed and character of the turn. A true *pirouette* is authoritatively defined as a revolution or series of revolutions executed on the support of one foot, or in the air; in distinction from turns effected by means of a series of alternating steps on both feet. The typical *pirouette* is that performed "on the crossed ankle"; but *pirouettes* "in attitude," in *arabesque*, *fouettée* *pirouettes*, and others, some compounded of a series of positions through which the body moves during the course of one revolution, are all within the definition, and have each their expression.

Pirouette day is perhaps the most interesting of the practice days, from the point of view of anyone sufficiently fanatical over dancing to enjoy steps for their own sake. In performance a dancer rarely or never shows his utmost technical power. Performance should be devoted to expression; and expression suffers if the technical means are not within the artist's easy and sure control. Practice, of course, has no such intention or restriction. In performance it is not often that one sees a *pirouette*, with unchanging position, carried through more than three revolutions. The artist who does a triple in performance is likely to double that feat in practice.

Coming to multiple *pirouettes* in the air, we get into the subject of man's work: aerial *pirouettes*, especially if of more than one turn, require tremendous power, since elevation must be attained to allow time for the turns. Beside which they have a decidedly

masculine look, as will be recalled by anyone who remembers the magnificent, flashing turns in the air that Novikoff executed last season.

THE sixth morning's practice is devoted to something rather apart from technic. We will call it composition work. Its purpose is to train the ability to think of and execute steps in sequences. In the vocabulary of the dance consider the individual step as a word—dividing it into syllables represented by its component movements, if you will. Now, in the poetry of words, one of the requirements is that words shall be put together with reference to the sentiment conveyed by their successive sounds, irrespective of their dictionary meaning. In the poetry of motion the gesture of explicit meaning tends toward pantomime. The step and movement of the dance, considered apart from pantomime, are concerned only with a sentiment that is analogous to the expression of musical sounds. We already have considered the emotional properties of some of the steps.

Now, after individual steps, the dancer must consider their performance in sequence; that is to say, in phrases. She must be able to think of several steps as a unit. Otherwise her performance of a phrase runs a risk of being disjointed, exactly like a speech of a person using an unfamiliar language. In Europe, where the standard of the ballet dancer's technical training is high, there is an added need of ability to comprehend in units of a phrase: a ballet master, taking charge of a corps for rehearsal, does not read his instructions step by step. The instructions to a group will come in a form that presupposes a mind, as well as a body, trained to the art. The command "*Pas de bourrée, jeté, pas de bourrée, fouettée, arabesque!*" includes a phrase of four steps and its finishing pose.

So much for the dancer's morning practice, an hour and a quarter daily except Sunday. Before each performance she spends another thirty or forty minutes in a brisk warm-up, consisting of steps both rapid and balanced, and stretching exercises. In addition to the mere preparation of the muscles for their exertion, Madame Genée lays distinct emphasis on the value of taking the exercises in three distinct speeds, —fast, moderate, and slow. Mind and body alike are in that way prepared to "go on" at the height of their perceptions and capabilities.

THAT endless effort to give to their employer, the public, their best,—is it not somewhat overwhelming, just as a proposition of honesty?

We have seen the daily preparation of the work of the individual, assuming that she is not learning new material or revising old. Generally she is occupied with one or the other. That means rehearsal added to technical practice, or substituted for it in whole or in part, if the day is not long enough to include both. Aside from that, someone has to be incessantly thinking about new costumes: either a satisfied public must be given variety, or a public not yet won must be angled for with bait of new colors. The publicity man must be kept supplied with new photographs. Each session with the photographer means several hours of work that is peculiarly exacting on the energies and attention of a dancer, since she must often hold unstable poses during a time exposure. Interviews have to be given, and a good interview requires preparation. The day is literally not long enough for an ambitious dancer's necessary or at least inevitable tasks; and many a dancer will tell you that an irrepressible review of the evening performance, with a merciless emphasis on faults, invariably begins passing before her eyes as soon as they close in search of sleep.

Fortunately the great artist of the ballet usually has the backing of one of the European ballet institutions, by whose almost paternal oversight she is relieved of the necessity of attention to the financing of her work. On the other extreme there are several varieties of dancer whose work require comparatively little preliminary expense. The class between the two extremes is not always so fortunate.

The ballet dancer who is not in an opera organization, or in one of the great dancing companies, must supplement her work with the interest of narrative; that is, she must have a "sketch." That is the belief of vaudeville managers. It imposes the same burden upon Spanish and oriental dancing. Of Irish, buck-and-wing, "whirlwind," ballroom, eccentric, and various other schools of art, the public is conceded the ability to

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